



The Newsletter of the Texas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society



Volume 24 (2)

Summer Issue

June 1998

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by John Prentice

May is here and that means springtime has also arrived. Actually, life is a bit ahead of itself with record and near record high temperatures and dry conditions as if it were full summer. Hot and dry always makes me think of water. But this year early summer is not the only thing making me think of water. There are major issues developing which can affect water and the aquatic world of resources which we all work with in some dimension or another. Senate Bill 1 beginning to decide future water use issues and concerns of varying interest groups over management actions (or lack of actions) for control of aquatic plants in Texas are two that pop to my head right away. We need to stay informed and alert as issues are discussed. Each and every one of us are representatives of the greater aquatic natural resource management business. All of us can offer factual information to the many others who need to understand more about natural resources and the relationships between mankind and those natural resources. Therefore, again I say stay informed and alert.

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MAY EXCOM MINUTES

by John Prentice

A meeting of the Executive Committee was held on May 19 in San Marcos at the A.E. Wood Fish Hatchery. Members in attendance were Tom Arsuffi, Paul Hammerschmidt, Fred Janssen, Gordon Linam, Charlie Munger, John Prentice and Dale Shively.

The Treasurer's Report was submitted by Dave Terre. Total assets of the Chapter were \$40,546.00 as of 4-30-98. The balance of our checking account as of 5-29-98 is \$9,814.18. Recent expenditures include the newsletter (\$219.40) and plaques for award recipients (\$245.00). Sources of income include 1st quarter dues from the National AFS office in Bethesda (\$649.00) and final deposits from our meeting (\$5,083.50). In other business, reimbursement for student scholarship money has not been received from WHAT. We anticipated a \$1,000.00 check from this organization to reimburse TCAFS for two \$500 scholarships given at our Annual Meeting. Attempts are being made to clear up the issue.

The Newsletter Editor Report was submitted by Charlie Munger. Volume 24 (1) mailing included all 1997 and new 1998 members. 200 copies were printed and 177 copies mailed. Printing (including a copy discount of \$16.60) and mailing costs were \$219.40 for an average cost of \$1.10 per copy. E-mail issues saved \$161.26 for this issue. So far with this issue, there have been no difficulties noted in receiving the newsletter by e-



mail. Distribution breakdown is:

Member mailed issues - 117,

Member e-mailed issues - 130,

Complimentary mailed issues - 60, and

Complimentary e-mailed issues - 17.

Volume 24 (2) is in the process of preparation.

Member lists are being updated and searches are ongoing for new e-mail addresses. Expected publication is at the end of May with the following distribution:

Member mailed issues - 100,

Member e-mailed issues - 161,

Complimentary mailed issues - 59, and

Complimentary e-mailed issues - 18.

John Moczygemba reported for the Nominating Committee. Progress has been made in searching for a way to provide the opportunity for members who are unable to attend the annual meeting to be able to vote for chapter officers by mail. Further information will be offered later.

Debbie Wade reported our current membership is 250.

Randy Blankinship reported for Issues that he planned to prepare an information article for the newsletter on water issues pertaining to Senate Bill 1.

Student Outreach activities reported by Tom Arsuffi included organizational planning with the past committee chair in preparation for 1998.

Gordon Linam reported Editorial Committee work has centered on contacting presenters at the 1998 Athens meeting to have papers published in the proceedings. One article has been submitted and two more are planned for publication in our proceedings. Work continues on editing the revision of the Pond Management Guide submitted by the Pond Management Committee. However, there was news that a version of this guide was already made available for public use. Motion was made, seconded and passed to have current editorial comments consolidated and submitted for manuscript correction and return to the Chapter Editorial Committee for final review before further public presentation.

Dale Shively reported that approximately 80 persons were now included on the Texas Fisheries Workers Directory and that new entries had not been arriving. He plans to consolidate this directory and our membership list for inclusion in the 1999 annual Chapter meeting registration packet.

Fred Janssen reported for the TCAFS Web Home-Page. We are having widespread use of the home page, particularly for newsletter and meeting presentations

information. For expanded disc space of 20Mb on the Internet motion was made, seconded and passed that the Texas Chapter pay \$5.00 per month through Nov. '98 (\$30). Cost of the Internet site will be reconsidered Nov. '98.

Paul Hammerschmidt reported on information gathered for planning the 1999 annual meeting and made the motion (seconded and approved) that January 23 - 26, 1999 be the dates, that Corpus Christi be the place (hotel not set at this time but more than one being considered), that the Texas State Aquarium be the site of our banquet and social, and that registration fees be as follows: Regular member pre-registration = \$25 (at the door = \$30), Student/Spouse pre-registration = \$15 (at the door = \$20).

President's Message Continued

At the latest Executive Committee meeting we discussed our next annual meeting and decided a couple of things. First, we will hold the 1999 meeting January 23 - 26 (and Superbowl will not be in conflict). Second, we will meet in Corpus Christi. Paul Hammerschmidt is doing a great job working organizing plans and is still working out other details. Our next report should fill in most of the other information areas. For now, however, you have a date and place and I urge each of you to mark your calendar to participate. Please contact me or any committee chair to assist with the various work of our chapter. Also, make plans to submit presentations at this year's meeting to share what you know with other members and help us all stay informed.

I pray the best for each of you, and that summer does not become too hot and dry.



USFWS ALLOWS AQUACULTURALISTS TO TAKE CORMORANTS PREYING ON COMMERCIAL FISH STOCK

Diana M. Hawkins

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today issued a depredation order allowing catfish farmers and other commercial aquaculturalists in 13 states to take cormorants that are preying on their fish stocks after nonlethal means to protect their fish have been shown not to work.

The order will be one component of an integrated program to reduce cormorant depredation losses at aquaculture facilities. Lethal take will supplement and increase the effectiveness of the nonlethal alternatives available to aquaculturalists.

The order is not intended to control the cormorant population, estimated to be increasing annually at a rate of 6-7 percent; rather, it is directed at site-specific problems in which cormorants are eating catfish and other commercially important fish species.

"Populations of double-crested cormorants have exploded in recent years, causing significant economic loss to fish farmers," said Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark. "With this depredation order, the Service is letting aquaculturalists take action to protect their livelihood when nonlethal methods are ineffective. This action will have no significant effect on the cormorant population but will provide needed relief on a site-specific basis."

The Service estimates the depredation order will save as much as \$20 million in fish taken each year in the \$714 million aquaculture industry. The greatest impact will be in the Mississippi Delta region where catfish farmers lose an average of 3 to 7 percent of their inventory each year to double-crested cormorants. Some farmers are being hit particularly hard by the birds while others are not affected at all.

The order applies to the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

Aquaculturalists may shoot birds only at facilities with an established nonlethal harassment program as certified by officials of state wildlife agencies and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

To take cormorants under this depredation order, aquaculturalists must first obtain certification from their state wildlife agency that a cormorant depredation problem exists, that they have employed nonlethal techniques to control cormorant depredation, that nonlethal controls have not been effective, and that lethal control is warranted.

Double-crested cormorants are long-necked, large-bodied diving birds. Their webbed feet and hooked beaks are adapted for chasing and capturing fish under water. Cormorant populations are now believed to be at an all-time high of between 1 and 2 million birds.

Aquaculturalists have had to rely on either harassing the birds, which is often ineffective, or putting net covers over their facilities to keep the birds out, which is often unfeasible or prohibitively expensive.

The order will require aquaculturalists to maintain a monthly log of the number of birds taken. These logs will be supplemented by phone and mail surveys conducted by the Service. Several other sources of data will also be reviewed annually to monitor the effects of the order on cormorant populations.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages 511 national wildlife refuges covering 92 million acres, as well as 67 national fish hatcheries.

The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes Federal excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies. This program is a cornerstone of the Nation's wildlife management efforts, funding fish and wildlife restoration, boating access, hunter education, shooting ranges, and related projects across America.



Western Regional Instream Flow Conference IV

October 8-9, 1998

Copper Mountain Resort, Colorado

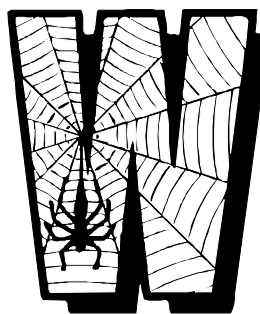
Water for Fish vs. Water for People: A Real Conflict?

This conference aims to bring together water users, agency professionals, academics, and conservationists to share the latest developments in instream flow issues throughout the western US. Current conference sponsors include the Bureau of Reclamation, Trout Unlimited, and the US Forest Service.

This year's presentations will address a broad scope of topics related to instream flow including:

- ◇ The scientific basis for determining instream flow needs,
- ◇ The economic and social values of competing uses of water; and
- ◇ The legal and institutional constraints confronting efforts to provide flows for both fish and people.

A final agenda and registration forms will be available in early July. To get on the mailing list, send a request to: Western Regional Instream Flow Conference, 190 E. Ninth Avenue, Suite 120, Denver, CO 80203 or email at WesternISF@aol.com. For more information contact the conference director, David Nickum, at (303)837-9383.



EBSTER'S WORDS

WEB SITE REVIEWS

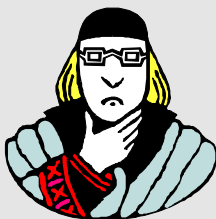
CARP NET (www.carp.net)

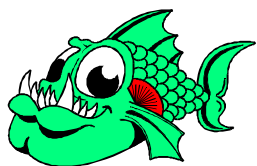
For anyone interested in fishing for those "other" species, this page gives a lot of good information and links to a wide array of other sites. As the name indicates, this page is dedicated to carp and carp fishing. The page is well designed but can have too many clicks to get what you are looking for. Three sections of the page deal directly with fishing for carp. These are Tactics, Tackle, and Bait. Tactics include instructions on a variety of fishing methods including locating good carp waters and techniques like topwater fishing, float fishing, and winter fishing for carp. The Tackle section has information and diagrams on how to rig to catch big and wary carp, and Bait obviously has recipes for effective carp baits.

Other sections include pictures and links (the page is part of the Carp Ring), a monthly column from a European carp angler, free carp screensavers and a virtual carp fishing game. The sections on print media and FAQs are extensive. Did you know there are 34 books printed just for carp anglers and four magazines? There is a lot more information at this site and it is worth checking out. Maybe it will change your attitude about carp.

EARLY CALL FOR PAPERS

Now is the time to be thinking about making a presentation at the next chapter meeting. Start compiling that data, generating some figures and slides, and coming to some grand conclusions that can be shared with your colleagues this January in Corpus Christi. Abstract/paper submittals should be sent to Gordon Linam at 505 Staples Road, San Marcos, TX 78666.





News Bites

Freshwater Mussels. In late November 1997, a MN couple was indicted by a federal grand jury in Des Moines, IA, on charges of transporting and selling tens of thousands of mussels illegally harvested in MN and ND inland waters in interstate commerce -- a Lacey Act violation. The mussels were allegedly bound for Japan, and caught by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service enforcement agents. The couple is scheduled for court appearance on Dec. 8, 1997. On Dec. 3, 1997, the WI Natural Resources Board approved a prohibition on the harvesting of washboard mussels, subject to review by the WI Assembly's Natural Resources Committee. [Assoc Press]

Yaqui Catfish. On Nov. 13, 1997, about 350 threatened Yaqui catfish were to be reintroduced into the wild in the headwaters of Rio Yaqui, AZ, by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This native fish has not inhabited AZ waters in more than a century, and is part of an international program to return 8 species of native fish to the Rio Yaqui and replace non-native sport fish with native fish. [Assoc Press]

Oyster Contamination. On Nov. 28, 1997, officials of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that 179 cases of illness during December 1996/January 1997 after eating Gulf of Mexico oysters were likely caused by commercial oyster harvesters illegally dumping human waste in waters where they harvested their oysters. Gastroenteritis was caused by at least 3 different strains of calicivirus. [Assoc Press, Reuters]

Fish by Satellite. On Nov. 24, 1997, Orbital Imaging Corp., a subsidiary of Orbital Science Corp. (Dulles, VA), announced its SeaStar Fisheries Information Service, providing daily fish finding maps based on imagery from its OrbView-2 satellite of ocean conditions. Now conducting a trial with 50 fishing vessels, full commercial operation is anticipated by Jan. 15, 1998. [Dow Jones News]

Red Snapper Ban. On Nov. 12, 1997, NMFS announced that, based on harvest survey data, the recreational quota for Gulf of Mexico red snapper harvest (4.469 million pounds) would be reached by Nov. 26, 1997. Thus, the recreational bag limit for this species would be reduced to zero from Nov. 27 through the end of the year (Dec. 31, 1997). NMFS requested that all Gulf states close the recreational fishery for red snapper in state waters and prohibit the sale of red snapper from state waters during the closure. [NOAA press release, Assoc Press]

Catfish Processing Record. On Jan. 22, 1998, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture announced that the U.S. farm-raised catfish industry processed about 525 million pounds (live-weight) of catfish in 1997, a new record and 11.2% more than was processed in 1996. [The Catfish Institute press release]

Estuarium Opens. On Jan. 20, 1998, NC's first aquarium devoted to educating visitors about coastal rivers and sounds - the North Carolina Estuarium -- opened in Washington, NC, on the Pamlico River estuary. [Assoc Press]

Red Snapper Quota. On Jan. 22, 1998, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council voted 14-2 to maintain the 1997 quota of 9.12 million pound for the Gulf's red snapper fishery in 1998, after charter boat operators forecast economic hardship if the quota was reduced. NMFS officials had suggested that a quota reduction by about one-third was necessary to assure species recovery from overfishing. The Council approved measures to prohibit charter boat captains and crew from catching red snapper, and directed Council staff to develop a plan to avoid unplanned closures of the recreational red snapper fishery. [Assoc Press]

Swordfish Moratorium. On Jan. 20, 1998, 27 chefs at up-scale restaurants along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts announced a "Give Swordfish a Break" campaign -- a voluntary moratorium on preparing and serving swordfish until a fishery recovery plan is developed as an expression of concern for overfishing of this species by longline vessels. [Los Angeles Times]

JOIN THE TEXAS CHAPTER

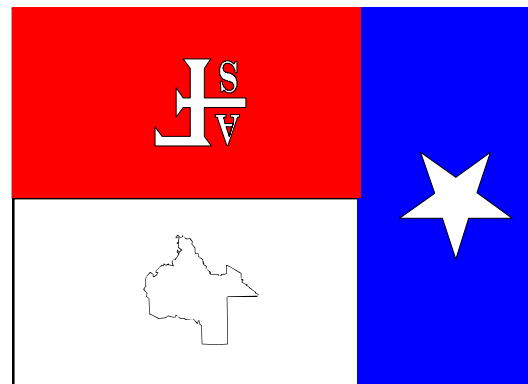
If you are interested in joining or renewing your membership to the Texas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, you can get membership materials at our web site <http://www.sdafs.org/tcafs/default.htm> or contact **David Terre, 11942 FM 848, Tyler, TX 75707** or the newsletter editor to obtain application information.

**Next Newsletter submission deadline:
August 25, 1998Fall Issue**

Submissions are encouraged. Submit a hard copy or a .TXT file by mail or email to the editor at **cmunger@arn.net**



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NEWSLETTER EDITOR
P.O. Box 835
Canyon TX 79015-0835

